July 4th Dear Leah

Solving the Thurn and Taxis Mystery, page 1900.

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ROYAL AND SOCIETY NEWS

Exclusive to "Modern Life."

Will King George Christmas with the Troops?

King George has been compelled to return from the front by unforeseen eventualities, but will return within one month. It is by no means impossible that his Majesty may spend Christmas amongst his soldiers. He spent one Christmas in Australia, and another in India, and, like a good many other people, his Majesty would probably be happier under unconventional Yuletide conditions than stuffing himself with mince pies and turkey and sausages. In days of yore, of course, it would have been sacrilege to have been absent from England. That was during the reign of Queen Victoria, when her Majesty always betook herself to Osborne, for from the time of her husband's death she could never bear to Christmas at Windsor owing to the painful memories the festive season always provoked. King Edward, of course, always Christmassed at Sandringham, and never once spent Yuletide at Windsor. The late Sovereign got Sandringham as his wedding gift, and by the time he came to the throne all the happiest memories of his life were associated with his Norfolk home, from the time he brought the Sea King's daughter from over the sea to rule there.

* * *

None of the Mistletoe Nonsense for George Rex.

King Edward never Christmassed with his august mother for many years before her death. Her hatred of tobacco got on his nerves, and Queen and Prince were happiest apart. But King George has been a "jibber" at Christmas-times. Not that he doesn't enjoy the fun, or love to see his kiddies enjoying it, too, but he is a serious-minded man, who likes to feel he is engaged upon a mission of empire while the rest of his countrymen are fooling around under the mistletoe. Good fellow, George Rex! Just the right man at the right time.

* * *

A Royal Feud of Fifty Years!

How some of the Royalties *must* hate each other! I am reminded of this by the recurrence during the past week of two very interesting anniversaries—those of the birthday of Queen Alexandra, and the sixty-sixth year of old Francis Joseph's tenure of his throne. These two famous personages have survived to settle some life-long animosities. For fifty years they may be said to have been "up against each other," through family and dynastic troubles, and now they get equalised by the fact that Queen Alexandra has lived to see her honoured son amongst his troops in the greatest and most glorious campaign that Old England has fought, while the Emperor, whose reign began in defeat, has lived through sixty-six years since his accession to see the sun of Austria-Hungary fast setting into oblivion. What revenges Time does bring to these exalted ones!

* * *

A Sorrow which kinked the whole of King Christian's Long Life.

When Queen Alexandra came over to England as a bride, the heart of her family was full of chagrin and wounded pride at the insult offered to the bride's father, who had no sooner mounted his throne in Denmark as a soldier prince (for he had been the only prince of the house of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glucksburg to remain in the military service of Denmark through the war of 1848-50) than Prussia and Austria fell upon him and dealt him a blow which kinked the whole of his long life. The trouble arose as follows: King Christian was a "selected" prince, and when he became king his relation, Duke Frederick of Schleswig, immediately contested his rights to the throne, although his father had been "paid out" in regard to his claim, and had accepted no less than 3,500,000 dollars by way of compensation.

* * *

Germany's Mean Trick in taking sides in Denmark.

The diet of the German Confederation (then, as ever, with designs on the North Sea and a way to the heart of Old England) made Duke Frederick's claim to the Danish throne an excuse for taking sides in the squabble, and before the little Danes had time to prepare adequately for the defence of their country, the combined avalanche of Austria and Germany fell upon them. Not that the Danes took their whacking like curs. Oh, dear, no! What the Belgians have done in 1914 their brothers, the Danes, did in 1863.

* * *

What the Danes Never Forget.

All the Teutonic nations of Europe descended upon poor little Denmark. The Saxons and Hanoverians were the first to arrive at Altona. Later on came the combined forces from Prussia and Austria, and by sheer weight of numbers Schleswig and Holstein was taken from the Danes. Not for nearly a year did the German Allies succeed in reducing Denmark to subjection. The end came with the final assault by the Germans of the fortifications of Duppel, the bombardment of Alsen, and the occupation of Jutland, and Queen Alexandra's father was forced to make a humiliating peace, and guarantee the Germans the expenses of the war!

* * *

King George Avenging His Mother's First Tears as a Bride.

All this trouble began in the very year which brought the Danish beauty to London as the bride of the Prince of Wales. So now you know how it is that King George has never hesitated for one moment about his duty to England in this present crisis. It is because the first tears his mother shed as a bride were at the sorrows of her country and of her family, through the cowardly combination of Prussia and Austria whenever they had a chance of completing the destruction of Great Britain—no matter at whose expense. Then it was Denmark: to-day it is Belgium. It must be no small satisfaction to Queen Alexandra to feel that old Francis Joseph has survived to see Time's revenges brought home to him as they have never been brought home in all his long reign.

* * *

Two Dead Earls and their Sons.

By a curious coincidence, two British prisoners of war have become Earls during the last week. They are Lords Crichton and Dalrymple, whose fathers respectively were the Earls of Erne and Stair. Of these, the Earl of Erne was much the better known. He was stout and John Bullish, and both Lords Erne and Stair were members of the truly "Old Nobility," with Scottish lineages going back into the dim and misty past. Another coincidence of a most unusual kind is that both these dead Earls made it a practice to reside perman-

ently and entirely on their estates all the year round. Lord Erne was Grand Master of the Orangemen of Ireland, and his four sons are all soldiers, with war services to their credit.

* * *

"Jock!"

Scotland has lost one of its truly Dickensian characters in the late Earl of Stair, so well known north of the Tweed as "Jock," and so completely unknown by any sort of name at all south of it. Lord Stair had put himself up against his King long since, and hence he never came to town, but spent his life at his favourite seat, Oxenfoord Castle, playing golf, shooting, and curling, and generally enjoying himself, as well as a man with a strong domestic instinct ever *can* enjoy himself away from the woman he loves, when that woman won't live with him. That, however, was the peculiar fate of Lord Stair, and though he had to forego the pleasure of his wife's society for many years, he took her unwifely conduct very badly, and showed no end of personal mortification in his refusal to conceal his antipathy to Lady Stair.

* * *

The New Countess of Stair.

She eventually ran away with the Laird o' Menzies, and may be on the Menzies property to this day, for ought we know. The Menzies are all dead—of that line, anyway—and the old laird's home knows them no more. Lord Stair, nevertheless, was very fond of his only son, Lord Dalrymple, who has had such a series of lucky escapes in Flanders, and is now a prisoner of war in the hands of the Germans. Lord Dalrymple is a fine, big, Scottish-looking fellow, who ten years ago married Miss Harford, the daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Harford, of Down Place, near Windsor, and they have two little sons. Lady Dalrymple is a pretty woman, with fair hair, blue eyes, and no end of grace and style. Musical, well-read, with plenty of *savoir faire*, tact, and taste, Lady Dalrymple will provide Oxenfoord and Lochinch Castle in Wigtownshire with a new chatelaine worthy of their historic memories.

* * *

"Why are the Volunteers like Old Maids?"

I well remember the late Earl's father. At Stranraer, thirteen years ago, he, Archie Hunter, and I (Archie now commands his Majesty's forces at Aldershot) handed over the medals, one to the other, for a general distribution to the Galloway Rifles' company which had been to the war in S.A. Old Lord Stair was a bit of a wag, and he had a favourite volunteering story of his own. He often told it, but always with the gusto of a raconteur letting you into his nuttiest chestnut. And to the gallant Galloways he told it as if it had just emerged from the barrack-room. Lord Stair had been a volunteer himself forty years before, when they used to poke no end of fun at the amateur soldiers, and ask, "Why are the Volunteers like old maids?" the answer being, "Because they are always ready and never wanted."

THE CIGAR.

"Say, boys, there's a Zeppelin at last."
"Where?"
"Yonder—hovering over the commissariat waggon!"

She (banteringly): "You really care all that for me?"
He: "Oh! I'm crazy about you!"
She: "I'm afraid it's a case of 'out of sight, out of mind.'"
He (desperately): "On the contrary. It is a case of 'in sight, out of mind.'"

Old Lord Stair was getting on for ninety when he died, but his son, the now deceased peer, died well under the allotted span. Lord Dalrymple hoped to be released temporarily to attend his father's funeral, and see to things in Scotland, which have not been too well attended to of late, but the Germans wouldn't let him come over.

* * *

Solving the Thurn and Taxis Mystery.

Those gay lassies, the two misfit Princesses of Thurn and Taxis, having settled their differences (in the legal sense, anyway), it is worth pointing out for the benefit of anyone who may be impressed by the title in the future, that neither of the ladies is, after all, the right one, from the purely German point of view. Prince Victor, who has been the cause of all the trouble, is one of the princes of a great European house of semi-royalties who began in Italy, and have since played big parts in the affairs of half the countries of the Continent, having been ennobled in Hungary and Austria, rising to Princes of the Spanish Netherlands at Madrid in 1681, also in Vienna not many years after, while in Germany they are Serene Highnesses, closely related to the late Austrian Empress, and also to the Sigmaringen Hohenzollerns. The legal Princess and the Piccadilly Hotel "princess" are therefore unknown at the head-quarters of the Thurn and Taxis family in Munich, and likely to remain so. We believe there are no children by either of them, which perhaps is fortunate, and saves any question of the succession of their children to the princely title.

* * *

Mr. Barnett and the Bold, Bad Baronet.

The joke of the Thurn and Taxis romance is the appalling funk which has obsessed the bold, bad baronet whose name has been so carefully guarded by the Court for six months past. Not that we have any particular sympathy with him. But a lot of other quite nice people might be hurt if we mentioned his name, though the temptation to do so is great, for Society has its own grudges against him, and it would do him good to "show him up." Unfortunately, Mr. Barnett didn't sit too tightly on the baronet's card in Court, and kept on rising, forgetful of his great secret. That, of course, was when the dispute was on at the Westminster Court, not the High Court case as to which lady was the "real" Princess.

* * *

A Belle and a Balloon.

The trouble with these West End hotel ladies with foreign titles is that they cause a tremendous amount of embarrassment to ladies of the *real* English aristocracy who happen to bear foreign titles. An instance of this is Princess Teano, who is extremely well known in Society, and is one of the most charming women in Britain. I am reminded of her by the pictures in the papers of Princess Schahahkoffsky, the Russian lady who is going to the front in an aeroplane. Princess Teano once had ambitions of this sort. So far as I know, however, she has confined her aerial frolics to ballooning.

I remember one night at a ball at Claridge's she told me she had arranged to go up with a party of friends the next morning to "see the sun rise!" We had a little bet as to whether it could be done. (I had met her at four balls already that week!) A fortnight later at Cowes we met again. The season was over in Town, and we were all prepared for a rest in anybody's yacht where the company had reached the stalemate period. I asked the Princess if I had won my bet. She said, "Yes, you have!" I chortled and said, "I knew you couldn't do it. You looked too tired even to fly." "But," said her Highness, "I wasn't too tired to fly, for I ascended, as I said I would, at four the next morning." "Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "then how have I won my bet? It was that you wouldn't see the sun rise." "But I didn't," laughed her Highness. "I went to sleep on the ballast!"

A Versatile Pair.

The heroine of this little reminiscence is the only child of the late Lady Walsingham by her second husband, the Duke of San Teadoro. This Lady Walsingham was a member of the Earl of Lathom's family, and Princess Teano was born in London, and all her life has preserved her intimacy with her numerous English friends. Her husband, Prince Teano, is the eldest son of the Duke of Sermoneta, an Italian of very high degree. But the joke of the Teano household is that while the Princess is stirring the clouds, her husband is calmly writing books and swotting over the ramifications of Moslemism. He is an authority upon everything about the Mohammedan world, and has written heavy tomes upon it. None the less, when I first met him it was in the lair of a tiger in Northern Bengal. A versatile pair, the Teanos!

* * *

No Old Boots, no Confetti, no Nuptials at all.

Lord Kitchener's remorselessness to the war brides is positively irritating. There is no limit to that great soldier's contempt for sobbing fiancées and distraught bridegrooms. The latest instance is the case of Lord Frederick Conyngham. No end of "influence" was available to get the noble bridegroom a few hours' leave in which to provide his pretty bride with a few virtuous blushes, but Kitchener was adamant. The best that Lord Frederick's people could do was to get him two hours in which to get wed, kiss the bride's chaste cheek in the cab, and then—off to the front! No "breakfast"; no old boots; no rice; nothing of the ordinary romantic embroidery of a nuptial knot—all in a rush and a whirl, with nothing to remember but "gathering tears and tremblings of distress." Well, let's hope the bride will love her soldier lad all the more when he comes home covered with glory. And, after all, that's a lot finer than confetti.

The Royal Ladies and their Sons with the Huns.

King Manoel and Queen Augusta Victoria and Queen Amelie came up from Fulwell Park for the Royal Dowager's birthday gathering, and, all outside rumours to the contrary, the Royal ladies were all full of real, tender, affectionate regard for the Queen-Mother on this interesting anniversary. The Duchess of Albany was there, although her son is fighting with the Germans. So was Princess Henry of Battenberg and her eldest son, Prince Alexander, and the sisters of Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, who is also fighting for the Kaiser. And, incidentally, may I be allowed to say a word for Prince Albert, for his position is entirely misunderstood in this country?

* * *

No Allegiance to King George.

Nobody accuses the Kaiser of disloyalty to England for fighting for Germany, although his mother was the English Princess Royal. Why, then, should Prince Albert be accused of disloyalty to England, when his allegiance is not to this country, but to Germany? The fact that his mother is one of Queen Victoria's daughters does not make him an Englishman. No one ever called the Kaiser an Englishman. The position of Prince Albert is that paternally he is a member of the Danish Royal House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glucksburg, which house provided Germany with an Empress in the person of the present Kaiserin, and though, through his mother, Prince Albert is a remote heir to the British throne, he is not a Prince of Great Britain and Ireland, and his allegiance in war is due to the regiment in which he elected to serve. There was a letter about him in the *Times* last week, intending to convey his position, but which entirely failed to do so. So here you have the facts.

OVERHEARD AT FOLKESTONE.

Total Stranger (anxious to make friendly overtures to Refugee Poodle): "I say! What's the French for 'Come and join our cat hunt'?"

LIVELY LITTLE LEADERS.

THE COMING OF RUSSIA.

One of the principal uses of the war will be to bring the people of England more in touch with Russia—a country about which we have perhaps had in the past more wrong notions than we have had about any country under the sun. Russia has always been to us either a vast, illimitable land of mystery and ignorance, full of dangerous anarchists who were supposed to spend a considerable portion of their time amid the delights of Siberia, or else a land occupied by a sort of super-Jingo tribe of people, whose principal object in life was to capture India and gradually demolish the British Empire. We were always a bit afraid of Russia, because we did not understand her, which is, of course, largely the reason of all fear. It might, indeed, be said about us with perfect truth that we were hypocritically afraid of Russia, perhaps the very worst form of fear. We had a sort of pretentious idea in our heads that we were destined to lord it over creation for evermore, and yet we didn't quite like the nasty sort of scout that occasionally was flung at us by the great country that had not by any means forgotten, and was not likely to forget, the "regrettable incident" of the Crimean War. But Russia has been very much the modern equivalent of Euclid's "unknown quantity" to the average Englishman. And the average Englishman neither likes Euclid nor any derivation from the philosophy of that much over-rated gentleman of boyhood's happy memories.

But there came a period when Russia began to be understood by us, or, if not understood (perhaps too strong a word), at any rate, partially appreciated. That period, for the average Englishman, was the period of Tolstoy. We didn't, of course, as a people, read Tolstoy, and if we had read him we certainly shouldn't, as a people, have understood him. Still, we gallantly pretended, like gallant Englishmen, that we had duly read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested the great Russian, and so were to a certain extent in line with the latest fashion in literature. And if we didn't read him, but just shouted his great name to the heavens, together with the names of Dostoievsky and other Russian writers, what mattered it? We, at any rate, by such means (and, after all, one or two of us really did read these literary gentlemen with the funny names) got a little in touch with Russia, and learned that she could produce, notwithstanding her despotism and anarchists and cruelties and inhumanity, some of the sublimest literature that has ever come from the pen of man. We learned that Russia was rapidly becoming one of the chief literary centres of the world, and we gazed with awe, and not a little fearsomeness (being, of course, respectable Victorians) upon the spectacle of our young novelists actually pooh-poohing the literary claims of some of the greatest writers of English literature in favour of the new and glorious gods from the illimitable land of snow and ice.

Thus began that process of getting in touch with Russia, getting to understand just a little about her, that has now a chance, through the war, of developing enormously, to the infinite benefit of both countries. And, by Jove, what a lot we are learning, eh, what?—as one can imagine our friend the "nut" pathetically putting it. We have discovered that poor despised and often hated Russia is a great, mystical, soul-driven creature who has developed into a very master of the science of soldiering, and has been able to provide the military experts with some of the ablest illustrations of the strategy of war that even they have ever had put before them. Nay, more. Russia has shown us, in the Grand Duke Nicholas, a Commander-in-Chief on the field of battle who is certainly the equal, and perhaps the superior, of any of his rivals in any of the countries now fighting. And it may be that poor old Russia, long the despised and rejected of Englishmen, will ultimately save the military and international situation for the Allies with whom she is so splendidly fighting, and with whom she is slowly but strenuously moving to a triumphant victory for the cause of truth and justice. Let us therefore give Russia her due, and at last reach out to grasp in all sincerity the hand of the great people whom in the past we have so thoroughly mistrusted and misunderstood.

And in pursuit of such a worthy object we cannot do better than secure every opportunity that is offered to us to read and study the literature, and especially the wonderful fiction, that is making Russia so great intellectually, and therefore great in the best and truest sense of the word. I would therefore like to call attention to a novel which, more than any recent work, I think, is typical of the new soul of Russia, and, therefore, calculated to induce those who read it to continue their study of the inner heart of the great people who in the future, as in the present, are to be of such paramount importance to the development of our destiny as a nation and an Empire.

The work to which I refer is a novel called "Sanine," by Artzibashef, and recently published in an English translation. And the reason this book has struck me is this—that it fulfils the function of every true and great novel, which is to get at the truth of some inside phase of human life and character, to dig right down to the very bottom of human motive and feeling. Of course, I need not remind the reader that that is just what our English novels do *not* do, with hardly any exception worth mentioning. It is true that many of the younger generation of novelists are making valiant and probably successful efforts to imitate the realistic and mystic Russian schools. But their efforts are very tiny, and it may be news to some of my readers (so ignorant have we all hitherto been of Russia) to know that in all English literature we have no novelists to compare, for getting by means of art right down to the truth of the deep things of life, with such men as Tolstoy, Turgeniev, Dostoievsky, Gorky, and Artzibashef—to mention but a very few of the great Russian writers.

And why is this? There must be a reason for it, for many of our English novelists have been masters of English prose, masters of character, masters of incident, masters of descriptive writing. And there is a reason for it, and a very clear and cogent reason, too. The British public have never desired, and therefore have never expected, truth in their novels. Nobody has ever given them truth, therefore. Indeed, if any English novelist had ever attempted to give us some of the truth of life as we are given it in "Sanine," he would, a million to one, have found himself in gaol for obscenity. But, unfortunately, a good deal of human life and character, as it is really lived, is revolting and repulsive. And it is only by openly depicting and dissecting such things and their contrasts in literature, and not by wrapping them up in the pretence and hypocrisy and sensuous religiosity of writers like Florence Barclay, that our novels can ever become true, and therefore great. We are learning more than ever in the present war that fear is the greatest danger than can beset a nation. Isn't it funny that we can learn that simple lesson so easily on the battlefield of guns, and cannot learn it on the infinitely more vital and more important battlefield of literature? For the literature of a country is the life of a country. It embraces its war and its peace, its Krupps and its Quakers. And it is because Russia is not afraid in her literature any more than she is on her fields of battle that she is achieving such wonderful things, and will achieve still more wonderful in the years that are to come.

But I have come to the end of my space before doing what I really wanted to do—discuss this great novel, "Sanine." I must therefore leave it to you, reader, to get it and read it for yourself. I will just say that it is not a book for babes, but is a brave and sincere and high-minded attempt to analyse the experiences of a young man who decides to live his own life in his own way, with an utter contempt for the conventionalities of society with regard to love and lust and everything else. It is, in short, a realistic analysis of human love. And think what a realistic analysis of human love really means. For only by getting at the great truths of humanity can a higher humanity be evolved in the dim and distant future.

JONATHAN GRUB STRETE.

AN AVERAGE DAY——AND RECOMPENSE,

A trumpeter sounds "Reveille." Many, many years ago I used to sully clean paper with ink-marks, eager to finish my thousand words; but now I rise reluctantly from my bed . . . . and wonder who's sneaked my boots, trousers, and puttees. But eventually I find them all hiding coyly in a corner.

Outside on the heath there is a bitter, cutting wind. There is also a water-tank with a trough attached.

After washing, you find that the orderlies for the day have brought you cans of steaming hot tea, loaves of bread, and bully beef; or, if you're lucky . . . bloaters, in tins. It all goes down splendidly, and before you're well aware of it, you find yourself on the parade-ground, waiting for the roll-call and the daily inspection. If there's anything wrong with your face (amongst other things), you're told so, and the telling is "continued in our next." When a fellow holds his chin bashfully on his bosom, it's not because someone's language has shocked his sensitive mind, but because he fears there's too much fungus on the lower part of his face.

"Extended order exercises." means that you are all taken into open country, learn to comprehend whistled signals, lie on your front, advance and flop down again on the signal being given, all without giving yourself more than a bearable attack of indigestion. And you creep ever nearer to a given point, pre-supposed to be held by the enemy, under cover of the continual fire of your reserves. At last comes the order by the drill-instructor in charge: "Fix bay'nets! Charge like hell!" You spring to your feet, rush forward, shove your foot into a hole, and miss sitting on your bayonet by perhaps two inches. Then you turn a somersault, and are reported as a casualty.

After this I think you deserve your dinner. At any rate you get it. The first day's dinner is composed of stew—rich and singularly appetising. Next day is given you stew—very nice. And the next. Next day's dinner reads as a newspaper headline of an election result: "No change." Then more stew—not bad. Next day ———. It's good stuff, you know, but now I often find myself dreaming of stew o' nights, which is irritating.

While you eat an officer comes round to chronicle any complaint. One I have heard of—no more.

"Any complaints?"

"Yes, sir; there's sand in the butter."

"Tut-tut, my man. That's a trivial grievance. You came here to serve your country, you know—not to grouse."

"That's so, sir. I certainly came to serve my country—but not to eat it."

Seven days' C.B.

In the afternoon maybe we juggle with rifles; or, maybe, we spell words like "cat," "dog," and "mouse," with semaphore flags, feeling delightfully cherubic, thinking of the days that are no more.

And you'd be surprised to find how ready you are for tea after three hours' continual drilling.

When the toil of a long day is o'er, comes the recompense. Though this place is desolate beyond words, yet there is here a little lady whom I know. . . . To her I impart all my sorrows, and she sympathises with me when I tell her of my bugbear—stew. When I ask her if she loves me, she is very vehement. She doesn't. She doesn't dislike me—no. But is indifferent—utterly indifferent. Said one of Shakespeare's characters of a maiden similarly vehement: "Methinks the lady doth protest too much." And so I believe that, mayhap, if I'm good, she may one day sit on my knee. . . .

Her age is only twelve, though. I am sorry.

ERIC DE BANZIE.

LITTLE QUESTIONS FOR PROMINENT PEOPLE.

When are we to have Sir Charles Wyndham's book of reminiscences?

* * *

Whether the sluices of Sluis didn't prove a hard nut for the barbarians?

* * *

If Bob Loraine's wound is bad enough to interfere with his acting career?

* * *

If Lord Kitchener's grim *mot*, "preparing the alibi after the act," does not deserve to live?

* * *

If good old Victor Grayson is guilty of pulling our legs when he advertises for work, and adds, "no politics"?

* * *

Is it true that everything "inflammable" has disappeared from Woolwich Dockyard, and that fire-engine firms are having the time of their lives?

* * *

Is it true that General Gallieni, Governor of Paris, has been appointed commander of a new French force, to be called the Army of the Rhine?

* * *

What is the "fancy price" being paid by the *D.T.* to Rudyard Kipling for his war articles?

* * *

Which of our great life assurance companies has succeeded in insuring only one life since the war commenced?

TOMMY IN PARIS.

"And are you ze Colonel, monsieur?"
"Me a kernel! My dear, I'm a full-blown nut!"

TABLOID TOPICS.

The footman is disappearing from London. He is now calveing his way to glory out yonder.

* * *

"Burns on the Germans."—*Evening News.*
More evidence of those horrible British atrocities.

* * *

Fortune-tellers are now forbidden to practise throughout the German Empire. The Kaiser's Press Bureau brooks no rivals.

* * *

At the request of some war journalists, General Joffre has posed before the camera. He has always been a poser—to the Germans.

* * *

Do mothers make bad teachers? asks the *New York Independent*. We are not certain, but the glad eye is a captivating pupil teacher.

* * *

The Amsterdam *Telegraaf* announces that, in future, it will not publish official German war news. They've cried "Wolff" too often, it seems.

* * *

Some spurious felt, intended for huts, has been supplied by Army contractors. The anger of the nation should be "real felt," as the Americans say.

* * *

Mr. Justice Ridley in the Pavlova-Harvey case: "To compare a lady with the Kaiser is rather an outrage." On the other hand, one can't compare the Kaiser with a gentleman.

* * *

All said and done, the Germans do respect our prowess. They are offering a reward of £1,000 on the head of Commander Samson, our daring airman, but they only put a crown on the head of their Kaiser.

* * *

"The German Chancellor's actions," says the *Cologne Gazette*, "are like the gropings of a searcher after truth." The trouble is that he has mistaken a dustbin for the well in which truth is supposed to hide.

* * *

The German Embassy at Rome has organised an excursion for Italian journalists to Germany, at the expense of the Kaiser. And the Franco-British excursion to Berlin will also be at the expense of the Kaiser, we imagine.

* * *

An obvious comment.—"Captain C. V. Fox, of the Scots Guards, who has been awarded the D.S.O. for capturing five German officers. He is a fine rower" (*Daily Mirror* "tag" to an illustration—probably of somebody else.)

* * *

In its transcription of a Central News telegram concerning Prince von Buelow's appointment to Rome the *Observer* refers to the Germans as "ermans." This is indeed the unkindest cut of all. It's worse than *lèse-majesté;* it is a capital offence.

* * *

Mr. William Archer has been writing at length in the *Daily News* on the triumphs of "Deutschtum." Well, if our fleet keeps on stopping their imports we have a shrewd suspicion that very soon the Deutsch "tum" will be reduced to its proper perspective—a meaningless, empty word.

* * *

It is reported that Private John Hale, of the London Scottish, was struck in the breast, during the recent charge, by a piece of shrapnel, but that a metal cigarette-case, given him by his mother-in-law, saved his life. This is a nasty snub for anti-smokers, and anti-mother-in-law jokers.

THE DANGER OF APPEARANCES.

The three men were, in theory, guarding the reservoir in the early hours of the morn. In fact, they were engaged in such an animated discussion on their powers and duties as Special Constables that a dozen crafty Teutons might have crawled over the wall and up the banks without detection.

"No, sir, I cannot agree with you," said the punctilious Mr. Perkins to the fatter of his two companions. "Respectable people do not lay themselves open to suspicion. If a man is found where he has no right to be, he should be instantly arrested. Any excuse he may put forward can be considered by the tribunal he is brought before."

"But surely," replied his stout companion, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and worked his official armlet—it was on the wrong arm—higher up, "you wouldn't run in some poor bounder who was coming home, say, after a night out with the boys, and had gone to sleep against the reservoir wall?"

"I have no sympathy with tipsy people at any time—and especially not in these strenuous days," retorted the other.

"Well, I should kick his—er—kick him, and tell him to cut off home," observed the fat guardian of the law.

"Which would be grossly irregular and exceedingly undignified," snapped the other. "I appeal to our friend here," Mr. Perkins turned to address the third Special Constable, "who I believe is a lawyer, to say which would be the proper course to pursue."

Mr. Rufus Huggett did not answer immediately. After rubbing his clean-shaven chin with his hand he remarked: "I must confess that—er—according to my experience—that is, of course, my professional experience—one ought not to be precipitate. A perfectly innocent man may, through pure inadvertence, become a temporary object of suspicion. I rather incline to Mr. Crummie's views."

Disgusted at the laxity of his colleagues, the irritated Mr. Perkins abruptly turned on his heel and resumed the perambulation of his beat.

"Bally prig!" was the comment of Mr. Crummie as, again charging his capacious pipe, he sauntered off in the opposite direction.

Left to his own thoughts, Mr. Rufus Huggett recalled with a shudder the painful incident of a few months back that had taught him, in all cases of apparent suspicion, to prefer the more charitable view.

And this was his tale of woe:

Mrs. Huggett, who wore the breeches, had decided that they should spend their summer holiday (the lawyer was taking his vacation in July) at Breesey-on-Sea, where they had not been before. It was bracing, and so pleased Mrs. Huggett, and not too gay—a feature more comforting to the wife than to her husband. For, to tell the truth, in spite of a somewhat smug and sanctimonious appearance, the lawyer had a distinct weakness for a piece of skirt.

Mrs. Huggett had gone down by an earlier train and taken the rooms. She met her husband at the station in the evening, and they taxied to a house on the front that was one of a row of residences having that strict uniformity of design so characteristic of English seaside places. They also had the usual back entrance through the gardens behind.

Towards the close of dinner the strains of a distant band upon the esplanade were wafted through the open window. The effect on Mr. Huggett was to fill him with a burning desire to get out and seek adventures among the crowd near the band. He racked his brains as to how he could do so without his wife wanting to come too. A complaint from the lady of a draught was seized upon by the wily lawyer as an excuse.

"It is decidedly chilly to-night, my dear," observed her husband. "One feels the change after the close-

Dutch war correspondents of late have repeatedly drawn attention to the congested state of the roads in Belgium. We offer a highly probable explanation of this state of affairs.

ness of town. I shouldn't go out to hear the band, if I were you."

"I have no intention of doing so," she replied, to the secret delight of her spouse, whose joy, however, was immediately damped by her adding: "There is no occasion for us to go out every night."

"I rather thought that a good, brisk walk would do me good after that stuffy train," remarked Mr. Huggett deprecatingly.

"Fiddlesticks! You would only get one of your chills."

The despondent lawyer for the next half-hour or so sat in the window with a paper in front of him. Behind this screen his wayward eye scanned the passers-by—their rooms were on the ground floor—and it was a glance from a passing flapper that kindled the flame anew and inspired him with the idea of a new ruse.

"D'you know, dear," said he, dropping the paper, "you're quite right. I do feel rather inclined to a chill. I think I will have a nice warm bath. What time are you going to bed?"

"Half-past ten," replied the precise Mrs. Huggett.

"So as not to disturb you, I'll have my bath now—it's nearly a quarter to ten."

The deceitful lawyer engaged the bathroom, which was on the same floor but at the back, and placing there his pyjamas, dressing-gown, and towels, allowed the taps to run for some time, as if the bath was being filled. Then, having waited until the coast was clear, he noiselessly passed through the bathroom door and crept out of the house by the back way.

For half-an-hour he gave himself up to the enjoyment of the occasion. He apologised in the most gallant manner to at least three dear little things for accidentally getting in their light. He asked three more if they would be so good as to tell him the time, while of one charming piece of goods he requested to be directed to the Town Hall. At a quarter-past ten he felt that he had at least paved the way to a jolly holiday, and that it was time to get back to the bathroom and into his night attire.

On his return to the house he found to his annoyance that some fool of a servant had locked the back door. There was nothing left but to climb in at the bathroom window, which he could see was not fastened. With the aid of a piece of stick he prised the window open and clambered through.

Turning on the light the flustered Huggett sank with a sigh of relief into a chair. Suddenly he jumped up. Where the blazes were his things? Who had them?

The sound of someone turning the door handle completed the unhappy man's discomfiture. There was an empty wardrobe by the wall (in the height of the season the room was evidently used as a bedroom), and he jumped into it and pulled the door to.

He heard someone come in and then lock the door. The person turned the water on and after a pause was obviously, from the sound of splashing, taking a bath. Mr. Huggett resolved to remain hidden until the person went.

The wardrobe was old and musty, and for the life of him the lawyer could not suppress a muffled sneeze.

"Who's that?" came a woman's voice from the bath.

The lawyer kept silent, while the perspiration ran from his brow. As the fair bather presently continued her bath, and then appeared to be robing, he hoped she had not located the sneeze. This ray of comfort was blighted by the lock of the wardrobe being suddenly turned, and the lady saying triumphantly: "Now I've got you, you blackguard. I am going for help."

The desperate nature of the situation suggested a daring course to Mr. Huggett. Directly she had gone he burst open the lock with a hard push of his shoulder. He sprang out and tore off his clothes, and, jumping into the bath, commenced splashing about. In a minute or two the door flew open, and the indignant lady returned, accompanied by another woman and two foreign waiters.

"Go away! Go away!" shouted Mr. Huggett. "Can't you see I'm having a bath? How very indelicate of you."

"That's the man!" screamed the previous bather. "He's either mad or drunk. Send for a policeman!"

One of the waiters disappeared.

Addressing himself to the other woman, whom he rightly guessed to be the landlady, the lawyer plaintively said, "Can't I have a bath without being interrupted in this abominable manner? First, just as I was ready to get in the bath this lady calmly stalks in and takes my water, and I have to hide in that infernal cupboard, and now my privacy is outraged by this crowd. I'm ashamed of you!"

"Unless you get out of that bath and this house in double-quick time," retorted the landlady, "you'll find yourself in gaol."

"But we've taken rooms here. My name's Huggett."

"If you are Mr. 'Uggett, you're in the wrong house. Your rooms are next door," calmly replied the landlady.

The look of undisguised horror on the lawyer's face was intensified by the entrance of a policeman and Mrs. Huggett. The latter had missed her husband, and, standing at her front door, had heard the waiter summon the officer.

Then pandemonium reigned.

The policeman, a zealous soul, said that Mr. Huggett ought to be charged with burglary, the lady bather said he ought to be whipped, his wife said he ought to be dried, and that the last speaker and the landlady were hussies for not leaving the room, while the two foreign waiters took a more businesslike point of view and loudly demanded damages in the shape of substantial tips.

It took the lawyer half the night to think of a plausible explanation, and half the next day to persuade the others to accept it. But the way he stuck to his tale was feebleness itself compared to the manner in which Mrs. Huggett stuck to him in all his subsequent walks abroad at Breesey-on-Sea.

CECIL HASTINGS.

Things that are not worth much frequently cost the most.

* * *

Be sure your stolen sweets are not merely sugar-coated.

* * *

An average man is one who feels he is a little above the average

* * *

The oftener people lose their temper, the more they seem to have.

* * *

The fruits of a man's labour are not always in the nature of his desserts.

* * *

A lie is more valuable than the truth when it invests us with ennobling illusions.

* * *

To some women a wedding ring is the circle which bounds their whole horizon; to others it is merely an encumbrance, whose place might be better occupied by one of diamonds.

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ROUGE AND RUFFLES.

Ring-Papers.

A new terror seems to have been added to life recently. It has something to do with cabalistic signs on a scrap of paper. I gather that if you don't possess one of these "ring-papers" you don't exist, so far as the authorities are concerned. Of course, for the moment the strange document exercises its power solely over the military lady, but, who knows, this may only be the thin edge of the wedge. Soon we may all be forced to produce "ring-papers" on demand. I don't know what will happen to me then, I'm sure. And what about all those others who are left undusted upon the matrimonial shelf? It would be awfully awkward if one couldn't go to lunch or to a theatre without some dread commissionaire person catching our feet in red tape, and murmuring "Ring-paper, please." I gather that a "ring-paper" is a kind of passport to respectability. It doesn't mind which way you get there so long as you arrive at the end. Which is perhaps as well. Love, as everybody knows, is a roundabout route. There are all sorts of stopping-places, and if you stop too long at any of them you are apt to miss the matrimonial express. Once upon a time I shouldn't have thought this mattered much—but in these days of "ring-papers"——

* * *

Something Out of Nothing.

I went to tea with a clergyman's wife the other afternoon, and found her busy, as usual, over a bazaar. Stars may fall and wars rage, but the parochial bazaar goes on in spite of all. I found this particular clergyman's wife sitting among the ruins of an old satin gown trying to convert them into a new soft cushion. "I've got to make something out of nothing," she wailed. Well, we all have, if it comes to that. Something out of nothing is what every woman has to create. Love out of the dust and ashes of matrimony, happiness out of the tears of gone years, sunshine out of storm, the pink leaves of Hope to 'broider the dark hem of workadays. I have no pity for the woman who just sits about and lets life drift round her. She can make such a lot for herself if she likes. Even from the splinters of the past she can construct herself a jolly little sailing yacht of happiness, while from the stout timber of the future she can make for her own a very super-Dreadnought. I have quite a little fleet of sailing yachts, and I by no means despair of adding one day a Dreadnought to my navy list. Life's a ripping game really if one knows how to play it the right way.

* * *

Just Slightly.

I was amused the other day to read of the ingenuous response of a faithless swain. When asked if he had ever loved the girl, he respondel, "Well, I suppose I must have done so once, slightly." But there is a great deal of truth wrapped up in that apparently bald remark. So many men do really only love the girls they marry "slightly." They have construed a kiss into something bigger than the world, and are more than surprised when they discover they have grappled with something altogether beyond them. Opportunity is the biggest match-maker going. A man is apt to forget when he sees a pretty girl under cunningly contrived circumstances that she will not always appear to him as a goddess in muslin or velvet, according to the season, but that he will have to see her at all times and at all hours for three hundred and sixty-five days every year, and that the chances of his getting tired of her are a million to one. It takes a lot of love to stand marriage. The man who at the end of twelve moons of wedded bliss can qualify in his heart of hearts for the Dunmow Flitch, and truly swear he has never repented his matrimonial lapse, is worthy to be on terms of equality with Leander and all the other cross-Channel swimmers of passion.

* * *

Living Bricks.

A friend of mine who saw an officer off at —— the other day en route for —— (the dashes are to please the Censor, not for any reason), tells me that after the long train had steamed out, every corner of the gaunt station seemed to be full of sobs and sighs. And just before it went, she said, "everybody seemed so happy and smiling." The war clouds, I am afraid, press heavily on almost every heart nowadays. I see somebody has started a purple satin league—every member is supposed to wear a bit of violet ribbon in memory of what our men at the front are doing. But what an unnecessary proceeding when nearly every woman's heart is bound tightly about with purple. And yet I suppose not one of us would exchange our royal purple for the blue and pink of folly again. It seems years since the cap and bells of mirth jangled noisily in our ears, and we went to tango teas and night clubs. Now our lives are bounded north, south, east, and west by a trench in a sodden field and tired-eyed men inside. Did you ever hear that story of the long-ago Roman general, who, being shown the beauties of Greece, asked, "But where are your walls? You cannot defend a city properly without walls." Whereupon the Grecian general led him proudly to the plain, where a vast quantity of soldiers wheeled at exercise in the hot sun. "There are our walls," he said blandly. "Every man you see there is a living brick." Living bricks, don't you think, describes our own men.

LOUISE HALGERS.

STREET CRIES OF NEW LONDON.
No. 2.—"Echo de Paris, sir?"

It's easier to give advice than to take it, but it's not really safe to do either.

* * *

Marriage is certainly a paradox. It ties you up at the same time that it ties you down.

BY THE WAY.

It makes me grin to see all those bills stuck about the country informing us that "Lord Kitchener needs every man!" That he *does* need them there can be no doubt. But the way some of the "ready-and-willing" ones get treated has eventuated in the creation of a large class of full-blooded Britishers who are now "waiting to be ticked off." I found this out at the club the other night. Jones, who is married and well-to-do, was telling the varied efforts he had made to do some kind of service in his country's hour of peril. Then Smith told his story—same as Jones's—and then I told mine. It amounted to this: that nobody wants either of us. Being 40, and just too old for enlistment, I applied to the War Office for a commission. No reply. Then I offered to teach (gratuitously) freehand-drawing to the troops in the White City, under the scheme now in operation there. Not wanted. Then I offered to go out as interpreter to the Indian forces (speaking Hindustani). Full up. Then I offered to take parcels of tobacco to the troops at the front, lollipops for the nurses, or mittens for the Tommies in the trenches. Nonplussed. My final effort was to take on the duties of a special constable in London. Kyboshed! Result: I, like Jones and Smith, am waiting for conscription, when we shall all be sharply ticked-off, and provided with those duties at home or abroad for which we are mentally and physically fitted.

* * *

A medical acquaintance who is (naturally) interested, tells me that there is something of a shortage of medicine-bottles, owing to the fact that we were getting such a large supply of small glass bottles from Mons. The destruction of that centre of industry by the Huns has necessarily curtailed the supply of this very necessary article, but "all may yet be well."

* * *

On October 2, which, among Catholics, is the Feast of the Holy Angels, a soldier-priest in Northern France crawled out to the firing-line on hands and knees in order to take the Blessed Sacrament to a number of fighting confrères who desired to "receive." The brave fellow was quite uninjured in the storm of shot and shell, and returned as he had gone out, or, as a priest phrases it in a letter to myself, "the heavenly guardians strove with the angels of death and prevailed."

* * *

We hear of many rummy things being capitalised nowadays, but what about a private detective's business becoming a syndicate or limited company? The one I am thinking of is in a very big way of business, and estimates his annual profits at £2,500. He wants to retire, and would like to "sell" the business, but I pointed out that the syndicate idea is best, as any successor to him might fail to retain his grasp on the big "jobs."

* * *

As showing how appallingly close the reality of war is to us now, a London dentist received a wire from an officer, a client, making an appointment for four p.m. At that hour the officer duly arrived, his khaki uniform very splashed and stained. "How long have you been back from the front?" asked the dentist. "I was in the trenches this morning, but was fortunate in catching a boat at Calais." (A fact.)

* * *

The devastating Hun in Belgium and Northern France might very well take a hint from the retort made by the Duke of Wellington to Marshal Soult when the latter was over here for the Coronation of Queen Victoria. Soult expressed surprise at not finding more trophies of the wars in Spain and Portugal among the treasures of Apsley House. "You forget, Duke," rejoined Wellington, "that your troops were in the Peninsula before mine were!"

* * *

The Garter is rather a belated Order for King Albert, although it could scarcely have been conferred at a more appropriate time. He was, of course, the only European sovereign who did not possess the broad ribbon. Some time before the war a Belgian diplomat told me that his King would not come on his Coronation visit to this country until he was made a Knight of the Garter. The Congo atrocities caused the honour to be withheld for some time, but latterly it was thought that King George would send either Prince Arthur or his eldest son to confer it on King Albert. As a matter of fact, it is now known that this was one of the principal objects of our King's most successful visit to the front.

* * *

I must confess I cannot understand the attitude of mind, now leading certain bilious-hued newspapers into dubious courses, which shrieks for war during long years while decent individuals are working in the cause of peace, and then when war comes shrieks, "I told you so," and more or less politely insinuates that the past advocates of peace are traitors who ought to be shot. It is all the more curious that the wiseacres are just those people whose cries of civil war in Ulster undoubtedly led the Kaiser to believe that England's hands were tied, so that she could never participate in the war.

He: "I should like to enlist, but I feel that my temperament is too highly strung for the battlefield."

She: "I see. You are afraid your life would hang upon a single thread."

A young girl-farmer out in Australia, hearing of Tommy's immense fondness for animals of all descriptions, and of regimental pets in particular, is sending to England, in the charge of her brother, a young female kangaroo—whom she describes as "very tame, thoroughly domesticated, and able to perform all sorts of tricks"—in the hope that some "petless" regiment will adopt it. May I recommend it to the Postal Department for the purpose of carrying letters to the trenches in its pouch?

* * *

When Mr. Robert Loraine volunteered for active service abroad, he was not, as so many people seem to think, entering upon his first experience of the kind. He also fought in South Africa during the Boer War, and distinguished himself not a little. He tells an amusing story of how upon landing at Southampton on his return home, he was besieged by a young and charming lady, who threw herself into his arms, and amid hysterical cries of bliss and a storm of ardent kisses exclaimed, "Oh, Jack, I'm *so* glad you've come! I simply couldn't have existed another moment without you." Upon explaining to her that she had clearly mistaken him for someone else, she drew back in horrified dismay and burst into tears. A few moments later, however, the *bona fide* 'Jack' appeared on the scene, and the kissing performance began all over again.

* * *

"Peter," the original, perennial Peter, who had developed into a sort of national institution—like the Lord Mayor's Show or the Drury Lane pantomime—has at length "grown up" sufficiently to get married, and so "Wendy" must be consoled by another "Peter" in the person of Miss Madge Titheradge. No doubt the latter will prove altogether charming in the part, but—well, there was just something about Pauline's "Peter" which I think we shall all find it hard to forget.

* * *

I think the great G. B. Shaw might at least have had the courtesy to stop and apologise when he rushed out of the book-shop and collided so violently with the lady in Fleet Street the other morning. I am afraid the numerous attacks made upon his recent extraordinary war articles have not sweetened his temper; but, then—well, we have all been under the impression for years past that adverse criticism, so long as it brought him plenty of notoriety, was just exactly what he revelled in.

* * *

How many surviving Britishers fought in the American Civil War? I wrote to Sir Chas. Wyndham for information on the point (he served as an army surgeon on the Federal side), and he replies that he believes he must now be the sole survivor. Certainly any such veterans would necessarily be about seventy years old. Both the late Bennet Burleigh and Sir William Allan, of Gateshead, had experience of the Civil War, the former as an officer on the Confederate side, and the latter in some exciting blockade-running adventures.

* * *

Next spring was to have seen a real General Post among European monarchs. King George intended to go to Russia, Belgium, and perhaps Holland. His Coronation visits have been much postponed. This was due to the many political crises, which made it almost impossible for him to get away from England. Besides, tours abroad, with all their necessary pomp and ceremony, have none of the attraction for the King that they held for his father. When Armageddon gives place to the Millennium, we may expect a series of war visits between the heads of the allied and victorious states. How London will cheer King Albert!

THE LOITERER.

Dear Old Lady: "Can I have a Vienna steak, please?"
Waitress: "Vienna steaks is hoff, mum, since the war."
Dear Old Lady: "Dear me, yes. The trains and boats aren't running properly, of course."

"Another large sum of money has been voted to the German Navy." Our own is quite capable of floating a loan.

* * *

Horseflesh, we learn, is in some cases being supplied as food to the German troops. Hors de combat, we presume.

* * *

We have heard nothing further of the Vicar of Brixton's play, "*The Carpenter.*" No doubt it has been shelved *pro tem.*

* * *

"A battery of heavy artillery and a number of machine *buns* were captured."—*Glasgow Citizen.* This takes some swallowing.

* * *

A daily paper heads one of its columns: "Britain's sugar supply—sufficient for eight *mouths.*" It omits, however, to state whose.

* * *

Mr. Bernard Shaw informs us that he likes to "bask in the sublime light of untrammelled intellectuality." We have noticed his distinct taste for the (sub)-lime light.

* * *

As the result of a recent suburban church bazaar, a large sum of money will be sent out of the country for the conversion of the heathen. This looks somewhat like trading with the enemy.

Your Future Depends on YOURSELF

IF the noble efforts and splendid courage of our Army and Navy are to be of the greatest use to our Country, it is essential that those of us who are unable to take our places in the fighting line should keep the wheels of industry and commerce revolving.

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IN TIME OF WAR PREPARE FOR PEACE

IN STAGELAND.

Sir George Alexander will have been a quarter of a century in management next February, and I understand that some sort of a function is to "celebrate the event." He has certainly been a wonderfully consistent success as actor-manager. Starting at the old Avenue, in "Dr. Bill" with his "kangaroo dance," he has since staged at the St. James's the work of nearly every dramatist of the romantic and social satire schools—Anthony Hope, Pinero, Carton, Grundy, Chambers, H. A. Jones, etc., and several Shakespearian revivals.

* * *

That most notable of current reproductions, "The Flag Lieutenant," ought to take the Haymarket management well over the Christmas holidays. For while you certainly can't call it a "war" play, it succeeds in striking the right note at the right moment. Godfrey Tearle makes a manly and acceptable successor to Cyril Maude as "the" Lieutenant, Allan Aynesworth is as good as ever in his original rôle, and Miss Ellis Jeffreys is perfectly charming. I'm glad to report that business is big at the Haymarket.

* * *

The death of Fanny Brough has removed a popular and gracious personality. We generally think of her in connection with "the Lane," where she so often assumed the rôle of the good, fairy-like lady of mature age who sets things right all round. But Miss Brough's ripe experience took her back to appearances in such successes as "Our Flat," Harry Hamilton's "Harvest," "Dr. Bill," "The Struggle for Life," and Pinero's "The Times," in each and all of which she excelled as a comédienne. She was also the Mrs. Warren of Shaw's "Mrs. Warren's Profession."

* * *

To my horror and indignation, I find that Louis N. Parker's "Copperfield" version was first performed in New York under the title of "The Highway of Life"! Why not just as well have titled it "The Desecration of Dickens"? Sir H. B. Tree may be trusted not to be guilty of any such banality. Stage versions of the great novelist's works were numerous in mid-Victorian days, and were almost always bad. He himself told how he once "threw himself on the floor of the box" because one such play was such an awful travesty.

* * *

So Jimmy Welch is to revive "The New Clown" as matinées. His performance in the circus scene of H. M. Paull's very droll farce is one of the funniest things I have ever seen. I do hope he may succeed in getting Edward Sass again as the ring-master—a perfect piece of serio-comic acting in a setting of buffoonery.

* * *

When will the good old London Opera House—I beg its pardon, the "National Theatre"—call a truce in the matter of changing its identity? On Christmas Eve it is to re-open its doors with an "Aladdin" panto., of which the names of principals strike one as particularly promising—Billie Barlow, Clare Romaine, John Macaulay, George Repley. Good luck to the scheme, anyhow, and its "popular prices."

* * *

Ellaline Terriss's return to musical comedy after a long interval, in "The Earl and the Girl" at the Lyric on Boxing Day, should be warmly welcomed. Her co-adjutors in their "original parts" are to include such familiar old favourites as Phyllis Broughton, Florence Lloyd, and M. R. Morand.

* * *

Robert Loraine's wound is severer than I had supposed, his lung having been penetrated by shrapnel. If he had never done anything save the two performances in which I saw him this year—in "A Place in the Sun" and as Mr. Parbury in "The Tyranny of Tears"—he would have made his mark as an actor of extraordinary individuality and distinction. The favourite comparison of "Bob" Loraine as an artist is with Charles Wyndham, and the compliment is certainly not ill-deserved.

THE UNDERSTUDY.

OURSELVES AND OTHER PEOPLE.

QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.

"Before I give you my answer," said the fluffy-haired girl, "I would like to know if you are in a position to keep me in the style to which I have always been accustomed?"

"If the styles don't change too often, I am," replied the wise youth. "Otherwise, the odds are in favour of my going broke."

* * *

"Your calling me an ass, sir, doesn't make me one."

"Of course not. It merely indicates the accuracy of my observation."

* * *

The Hero: "My parents tried hard to keep me from becoming an actor."

The Villain: "I congratulate them on their success."

* * *

ONE OF THE UPPER TENTH.

Magistrate (to delinquent charged with begging): "Three days' imprisonment on bread and water. Take him away."

Beggar: "Make the livin' a trifle richer, yer washup, and I'll stay a week."

* * *

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"Why, centenarians, I believe."

—*Dallas News.*

* * *

He: Will you marry me?

She: Do you think you could keep me in clothes?

He: That's the first thing I'd try to do.

—*California Pelican.*

* * *

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Ethel: Did he recommend any special course of study?

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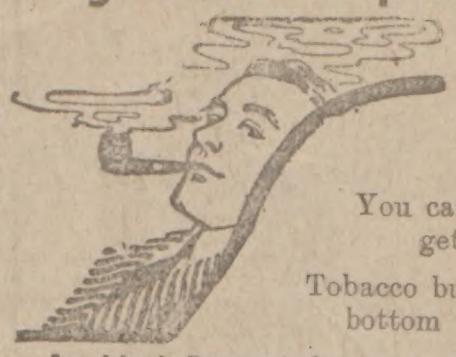

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